

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 3: Intake	Effective Date: November 1, 2005
	Section 4: Initial Evaluation of CA/N Intake Reports	Version: 1

POLICY

- The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will evaluate every child abuse/neglect (CA/N) intake report it receives and make determinations about:
 - Whether or not the allegations meet the [statutory definition of CA/N](#) and should therefore be assigned for investigation (assessment); **and**
 - Whether or not the report contains enough information to identify or locate the child and initiate an investigation (assessment); **and**
 - How quickly the investigation (assessment) must be initiated.
- Within **30 minutes** of the conclusion of the initial call from the reporter, the intake worker will relay the CA/N intake information to the intake supervisor for review. Supervisory review may only be bypassed if and only if a one-hour response time is required and a supervisor is not immediately available. See separate policy [Supervisory Review of CA/N Intake Reports](#).
- DCS will re-contact the reporter if more information or clarifications are needed to make a determination about the appropriate DCS response to the report.
- DCS will not contact any other persons or consult any non-DCS records or databases to gather information about any subjects in the report prior to assigning the report for investigation (assessment).

Code References

- [IC 31-9-2: Family Law and Juvenile Law, Definitions](#)
- [IC 31-34-1: Juvenile Law, Child in Need of Services](#)

PROCEDURE

The intake worker will complete the following at the conclusion of the reporter's initial call:

1. If time allows, conduct a search of current and historical DCS records (ICWIS and ICES) and summarize any findings in the allegations section of the CA/N intake report. Note: This step may be completed by clerical staff.
2. Review the intake report and the information gained from the DCS records search.
3. Re-contact the reporter to expand upon or clarify information in the CA/N intake report only if necessary to determine the appropriate DCS action.
4. Determine if the allegations meet the statutory definition of CA/N. See separate policy, [Statutory Definition of CA/N](#).
5. Complete the following if he/she determines the statutory definition of CA/N **has** been met:
 - a. Recommend that the report be assigned for investigation (assessment).
 - b. Recommend how quickly the investigation (assessment) must be initiated. See separate policy on [Initiation Times for Investigation \(Assessment\)](#). Note: When using ICWIS, review the timeframe assigned by ICWIS and make any appropriate overrides.

- c. Follow any additional procedures for special intakes (See separate policies: [Institutional CA/N Intake Reports](#), [Transferring Intercounty CA/N Reports](#), [Intentional False Reporting](#), and [Joint Investigations](#)).
 - d. Recommend appropriate links to any investigations (assessments), open 30 days or less, involving the same alleged perpetrator, alleged victim and same/similar allegations. See separate policy, [Linking CA/N Reports to Open Investigation \(Assessments\)](#).
6. Recommend the report for screen-out if he/she determines the statutory definition of CA/N **has not** been met. See separate policy, [Recommending CA/N Reports for Screen-Out](#).
7. Forward the intake report to the intake supervisor. This may be done electronically or in hard copy, or if necessary due to time constraints, by reading the information over the phone.
 - a. An intake worker **may** bypass supervisory review and assign a case to an FCM for investigation if a one-hour response time is required and the supervisor is not immediately available. The intake worker should make contact with the supervisor as soon as possible after assigning the case and share the details of the report with the supervisor.
 - b. An intake worker **may not** bypass supervisory review on any reports he/she recommends for screen-out.
8. Confirm receipt of the report unless supervisory review was bypassed. Ideally, this will be done by making direct contact with the supervisor either in-person or via phone. In situations where this is not practical, ensure receipt through a standardized delivery process such as a high-priority in-box, an incoming intake report log, etc.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Records Searches

ICWIS and ICES databases may reveal pertinent information about the subjects of a CA/N report. The worker should examine all information for “red flags” that would cause a reasonable person to have concerns for the child’s safety and well-being or worker safety. Pertinent facts should be briefly summarized in the allegations section of the intake report, such as dates and dispositions of previous DCS reports, investigations and cases.

Confirming Supervisory Receipt of Intake Reports

Whenever possible, it is good practice for the intake worker to get actual confirmation (i.e., in-person acknowledgement, a phone conversation, or a reply email) of receipt of an intake report. This is particularly important when an investigation must be initiated within one hour. By getting a confirmation, the intake worker can assure that the investigation will be assigned and initiated within the appropriate time frames. When a confirmation is not practical, a standardized delivery process should be used such as a high-priority in-box, an incoming intake report log, etc.

FORMS AND TOOLS

- CA/N Intake Report (310) – available in ICWIS
- Intake Decision Tree/Support Tool (under development)

RELATED INFORMATION

Allegations that Occurred in the Past

DCS reserves the right to **investigate** (assess) allegations of CA/N, no matter how long ago the alleged incidents occurred. This is despite the statute of limitation relative to child abuse and neglect ([IC 35-41-4-2 Periods of Limitation](#)), which sets forth the time limits for the **prosecution** of CA/N. The offenses listed in the child in need of services (CHINS) definitions are either felonies or misdemeanors and are subject to the statute of limitation, after which time prosecution is barred. A Class B, Class C or Class D felony cannot be prosecuted unless the prosecution is commenced within five (5) years after the commission of the offense; and the prosecution of a misdemeanor must be commenced within two (2) years. A prosecution for murder or a Class A felony may be commenced at any time. The time limit for certain sexual offenses is extended, as detailed further in IC 35-41-4-2.